

Gains in J&K lift India out of UN 'kids & armed conflict' list

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NEW DELHI: Taking note of the measures initiated by the government, specifically in Jammu and Kashmir, "to better protect children", the United Nations has for the first time since 2010 removed India from the latest edition of the Secretary General's 'Children and Armed Conflict Report'. Jammu and Kashmir was cited as the prime "conflict area" in earlier editions of the report on alleged violation of children's rights. The annual UN report, released on Tuesday, focusses on the impact of armed conflict on children and information on violations of their rights across countries. "In view of the measures taken by the government to better protect children, India has been removed from the report in 2023," says the latest report for

January-December, 2022. As the Women and Child Development ministry highlighted the development, minister Smriti Irani, in a tweet, said, "Grateful to team at ministry of WCD, MHA and MEA for leading the effort from the front. A resolution long awaited, an outrageous anomaly that now stands corrected."

The ministry issued a statement highlighting that India was being mentioned in the report since 2010 along with other countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines for alleged recruitment and use of boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir and detention of boys by security forces.

"All statutory service delivery structures like the Child Welfare Committee and Juvenile Justice Boards under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 have been established in J&K," the ministry said. The JJ Act was implemented in J&K only after abrogation of Article of 370 in August 2019.

On India's efforts to put forth its position, the ministry stated that the government had been consistently engaged in efforts to exclude the country's name from this list. The ongoing engagement of the government with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) sped up after an inter-ministerial meeting was held in November 2021.

"It led to an agreement to appoint a national focal point to identify priority national interventions to enhance protection of children, joint technical mission to hold inter-ministerial, technical-level meetings with the UN to identify areas of enhanced cooperation for child protection," the ministry said.

A workshop on strengthening child protection was held in J&K in November last year by the ministry in collaboration with the home ministry, the J&K administration and the United Nations.